R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

The claims have been amended to make some clarifying amendments, including some minor grammatical improvements and corrections of some minor antecedent basis problems, so as to put them in better form for issuance in a U.S. patent.

In addition, claims 13-20 have been added to recite additional features of the present invention, and/or to recite the structure of the present invention in different terms.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be approved and entered.

It is respectfully submitted, moreover, that the amendments to the claims are not related to patentability, and do not narrow the scope of the claims either literally or under the doctrine of equivalents.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of USP 5,989,118 (“Chiba et al”) and JP 11-296720 (“Gomi et al” - cited by the Examiner as

"Yoshiaki"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as set forth hereinabove.

Chiba et al has been cited as disclosing a coin holder and sorting hole in general, while Gomi et al has been cited as disclosing a belt guide as recited in independent claim 1.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that even considered in combination, Chiba et al and Gomi et al do not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of the coin contacting faces and the escape space as recited in amended independent claim 1.

In particular, claim 1 recites: (i) a pair of coin contacting faces which are provided at opposite sides of the coin dispensing belt with respect to each other, so as to be capable of supporting the coin, and which are positioned lower than the coin carrying surface of the coin dispensing belt, and (ii) an escape space formed on the belt guide, for allowing the coin carrying surface of the coin carrying belt to be positioned lower than the coin contacting faces when a downward bending force is applied to the coin dispensing belt.

With this structure, when the load to the coin dispensing belt increases, the coin dispensing belt can be positioned lower than the coin contacting faces in the escape space, such that the coins are supported by the coin contacting faces.

As explained in paragraph [0030] on pages 15 and 16 of the present application, when the number of coins held in the coin

holder is small, the coins are carried so as to be apart from the belt guide plate due to the tension of the coin dispensing belt. Moreover, since the width of the coin holder is substantially the same as the diameter of the coins held therein, the load to the coin dispensing belt tends to increase in proportion to the number of coins held in the coin holder. And when the load to the coin dispensing belt increases, the load to a driving source (e.g., a driving motor for the coin dispensing belt) increases and the friction between the belt guide plate and the coin dispensing belt also increases. As a result, a tremendous load is applied to the driving motor.

With the structure recited in amended independent claim 1, the escape space allows the coin carrying surface of the coin dispensing belt to be positioned lower than the coin contacting faces when a downward bending force is applied to the coin dispensing belt. The weight of the coins can thereby be loaded on the coin contacting faces, so that the occurrence of friction between the belt guide plate and the coin dispensing belt can be avoided in the escape space. As a result, even if a large number of coins (held in the coin holder, which has a width substantially equal to a diameter of the coins) are carried and dispensed out on the coin dispensing belt, the load to the driving motor for rotationally driving the coin dispensing belt is not increased.

By contrast, it is respectfully submitted that Gomi et al does not disclose, teach or suggest the combination of the structure of the coin contacting faces and the escape space recited in claim 1. That is, Gomi et al discloses belt relief portions 5d and 5e for divided belts 1a and 1b, into which the belts 1a and 1b may escape to prevent the force acting in a coin delivery direction at a separating roller 2 from increasing when a plurality of coins are overlapped at the separating roller 2. It is respectfully submitted, however, that Gomi et al does not disclose, teach or suggest the structure of the coin contacting faces and the escape space recited in claim 1, and as a result also does not achieve the advantageous effect of the present invention whereby the load to the driving motor for the coin dispensing belt is not increased.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that even if Gomi et al were combinable with Chiba et al as suggested by the Examiner, the structural features and advantageous effects of the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 still would not be achieved or rendered obvious.

New independent claim 14, moreover, recites: a pair of coin contacting faces which are provided at opposite sides of the coin dispensing belt with respect to each other, so as to be capable of supporting the coin, and which are positioned lower than the coin carrying surface of the coin dispensing belt; and a belt guide,

which is provided under the inner surface of the coin dispensing belt and which guides the coin dispensing belt along a coin carrying direction; wherein the belt guide comprises: (i) at least one shallow portion which prevents the coin carrying surface of the coin dispensing belt from being positioned lower than the coin contacting faces when a bending force is applied to the coin carrying surface over the shallow portion, and (ii) at least one escape space which permits the coin carrying surface of the coin dispensing belt to be positioned lower than the coin contacting faces, such that the coin contacting faces support the coin on the coin dispensing belt over the escape space, when a bending force is applied to the coin carrying surface over the escape space.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that even if Gomi et al were combinable with Chiba et al as suggested by the Examiner, the structural features and advantageous effects of the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 14 also would not be achieved or rendered obvious.

New independent claim 19, moreover, recites: a pair of coin contacting faces which are provided at opposite sides of the coin dispensing belt with respect to each other, and which are positioned lower than the coin carrying surface of the coin dispensing belt; and a belt guide which guides the coin dispensing belt along a coin carrying direction, and which is positioned below the inner surface of the coin dispensing belt

and lower than the coin contacting faces; wherein the belt guide comprises: (i) at least one shallow portion positioned such that a depth from the coin contacting faces to a surface of the belt guide at the shallow portion is less than a thickness of the coin dispensing belt, and (ii) at least one escape space positioned such that a depth from the coin contacting faces to a surface of the belt guide at the escape space is greater than a thickness of the coin dispensing belt.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that even if Gomi et al were combinable with Chiba et al as suggested by the Examiner, the structural features and advantageous effects of the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 19 also would not be achieved or rendered obvious.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that each of amended independent claim 1 and new independent claims 14 and 19, and claims 2-13, 15-18 and 20 respectively depending therefrom, all clearly patentably distinguish over Chiba et al and Gomi et al under 35 USC 103.

RE: INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that a copy of JP 2000-242844, which was cited in an IDS filed on August 21, 2006, is not present in the application file, and that JP 2000-242844 has therefore not been considered by the Examiner.

It is respectfully submitted that a copy of JP 2000-242844 was submitted with the IDS filed on August 21, 2006, as evidenced by the copy of the return receipt postcard submitted herewith. For the Examiner's convenience, another copy of JP 2000-242844 is also submitted herewith. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner consider JP 2000-242844 and make it of record, and it is respectfully requested that the Examiner return an initialed copy of the form PTO/SB/08A submitted with the IDS filed on August 21, 2006, to confirm that JP 2000-242844 has been considered and made of record.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

/Douglas Holtz/

Douglas Holtz
Reg. No. 33,902

Frishauf, Holtz, Goodman & Chick, P.C.
220 Fifth Avenue - 16th Floor
New York, New York 10001-7708
Tel. No. (212) 319-4900
DH:iv